

Leicester, Massachusetts, May 30, 1846.

My dear Sir,

The steamship, which (I presume) will carry this, will bear to your country tidings which I deeply feel are most disgraceful to ours. You will hear of us as involved in a war with Mexico, which has already resulted in the loss of many lives, and of our Government as bent on prosecuting it farther - to what extent, the future only can show. You will gather the particulars of this war from the papers. Briefly, I will say it is a war of robbery & for Slavery. Slavery led to the seizure of Texas, for a seizure of that province it ~~really~~ clearly will appear to be, when we go back to the origin of the matter. Texas was first peopled by emigration from <sup>the U. S.</sup> ~~America~~ with the view of getting the control there, & then severing that province from Mexico. This was done - how, is a matter of too recent history to need to be rehearsed. Still, gross as was the outrage on Mexico, rapacious & insulting as was the spirit manifested to that sister-republic & her functionaries, I do not believe war would have ensued, had not the U. S. committed a farther and a most high-handed, aggression on Mexican territory. The <sup>western</sup> boundary line of the province of Texas was the river Nueces; ~~some~~ after the Annexation of Texas to the U. S. was consummated, Mr. Polk (an wretched Executive) ordered Gen. Taylor with some thousands of troops, under the sounding title of "Army of Occupation," to advance into Texas and take a position at Corpus Christi near the mouth of the Nueces. Had ~~this~~ no more than this been done, no war would have followed in all human probability. Though Mexico felt stung <sup>by</sup> ~~with~~ her wounds, still in her condition of internal war she would unquestionably have avoided a war with this country or any other. But this was not all. After a period of inaction at Corpus Christi, Gen. Taylor was suddenly ordered to advance to the Rio Grande, (or Bravo del Norte, as also called) some hundred miles into the Mexican province of Tamaulipas, a loyal province to Mexico, a region whose inhabitants never belonged to Texas nor took any part in the Texan matter. To the very banks of the Del Norte Taylor marched, and there, directly opposite the large Mexican city Matamoras, established his camp, which he immediately proceeded to fortify in the strongest manner,



pointing his cannon directly at Matamoras. He also <sup>fortified</sup> ~~occupied~~ Point Isabel, some 60 or 70 miles in the rear of his Camp, a place on the coast, as a depot for stores & military equipments of all sorts. Matamoras was previously occupied by a Mexican Army, whose strength has been variously estimated from 4 to 12,000 men, & even upwards, at first under the command of Gen. Ampudia, and now of Gen. Arista. ~~But~~ Gen. Taylor was notified that he was invading Mexican territory, and called upon to retire beyond the Nueces, or it would be regarded that he had commenced hostilities against Mexico, and his invasion would be repelled. He would not stir, and very soon came conflicts, and small <sup>encounters</sup> ~~skirmishes~~, & skirmishes between straggling parties, - very pretty beginnings for a livelier state of things. A large body of Mexican troops crossed to the Eastern side of the Del Norte, came between Gen. Taylor's Camp & Point Isabel (the depot of provisions, &c.), and so intercepted communication & cut off supplies. Gen. T. started with some 1200 men to cut his way to Pt. Isabel; he marched there without seeing a Mexican. They allowed him an unobscured passage. While he was gone the camp was attacked from the batteries at Matamoras, and a general cannonading was kept up thro' the day. Flaming reports came to us of the result - that Matamoras was in ashes, 700 Mexicans killed, &c. &c. Later accounts show that the town received very little damage, and that but few lives were lost, the inhabitants having generally fled from the place. On Gen. Taylor's return to his camp, with a large train of wagons, he was twice attacked by the Mexican forces, and twice routed them, with very great slaughter to them it is said (but probably there is exaggeration here, as in the former case), and certainly with some severe losses to himself. Quite a number of officers have been killed; among them, Major Ringgold, said to be the most accomplished & scientific artillery officer in ~~the~~ the U.S. Army, ~~and~~ during this fight, the fort opposite Matamoras continued to be fired upon ~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ (as Gen. Taylor himself reports) for a period in all of 160 hours, during which Major Brown, its commander was killed by the bursting of a shell. Gen. Paredes is said to be advancing to Matamoras with 15,000 men. You will see that our Congress has virtually declared war, and put 10 millions of dollars & 50,000 volunteers in the President's hands. Massachusetts has been called on, already, to raise



one regiment, and our Governor, to the great ~~sorrow~~ sorrow and disgust of many, besides the well-known Peace & Antislavery Men, has issued his Proclamation. Many have hoped he would have the nerve of Caleb Strong, Gov. of Massachusetts in the last war with Gr. Britain, who refused to let the troops, raised in Massachusetts, be marched beyond the boundaries of the State.

I have given you much more of ~~a~~ ~~the~~ detail than I designed. Such is the present posture of affairs. Before the Steamship sails, some other news of consequence may reach us. — It is a very general opinion here that England will interfere in this matter; and this opens a prospect before us which I assure you, my dear Sir, I contemplate with unmitigated pain. The ~~prospect~~ <sup>danger</sup> of War between the U.S. and Gr. Britain seems to me to be imminent. You know, and Mr. Armstrong knows, that I have never fallen in with the ~~feelings~~ ~~expected~~ expectations, entertained by many, of a War between your country & ours. That war was expected to grow out of the Oregon question. I have always been confident that that question would be settled without war; and everything latterly, here, has been tending to that result. But now, suddenly & by the wicked management of Mr. Polk, we are deep in a war with Mexico — a war of invasion & conquest — the results of which no man can predict. The prospect of a still more extended state of hostilities opens before us, dark, almost wholly dark as it is, disastrous and awful as it must be, one ray of hope shines through. If England engages with Mexico in a war against the U.S., Slavery must fall.

One thing more about the Mexican War I should have said. What I stated about the W. boundary of Texas is not the one-sided opinion of ~~the~~ Abolitionists, Peace Men, or Northern Whigs. It has been asserted, & ~~demonstrated~~ <sup>long</sup> in Congress, by Mr. Benton of Missouri, one of the leaders of the Democratic party, and by far the ablest man of the Western States. If you see the N.A.S. Standard, you will find his speech. I forget whether it was in the Liberator. He explicitly asserts that to march beyond the Nueces would be an invasion of Mexico, &c. And only see on what grounds Mr. Polk, in his War Message to Congress, places his justification of ordering the U.S. troops to the Del Norte! Why! The Congress of Texas, in 1836 or thereabouts, voted that the Del Norte should be their Western boundary!! and so he, Polk,



thinks that is enough! They might just as well have voted to make the Pacific Ocean their Western boundary. This is a sample of the madness & wickedness of our President & his party. I have no words to express my sense of the utter want of principle ~~which~~ in all his proceedings.

You will see, also, that Mr. Benton has taken an equally honorable & manly - the more so, because conflicting with the views of his own party, or the majority of it - on the Oregon question. He has declared that the U.S. have no claim to the line of  $54^{\circ} 40'$ ; - that the line of  $49^{\circ}$  is one <sup>on</sup> which we may rightfully compromise, and to which Grt. Britain is bound to agree.

I pray God there may be no war between England & the United States, but, if there should be, may ~~he~~ <sup>that</sup> grant ~~it~~ with the overflowing scourge and by it, Slavery here shall find an eternal grave. But, for me, I protest against War. It is a Wrong too great to be perpetrated - to be resorted to for any purpose, unless it be to resist the invaders of our very hearth-stones. That exception I am not yet quite prepared to withdraw.

And now for matters of more private interest. I wrote to you by the Steamship of May 1<sup>st</sup>, and should not be so soon again troubling you with a letter, save for the state of our national affairs above referred to. The last ship from Eng<sup>d</sup>. brought me your packet of 6 little reports on education of colored children in <sup>the</sup> Br. W. Indies, with a paper, and one of your always welcome letters - date April 28<sup>th</sup>. I ~~ought to have~~ did not however receive the parcel until Thursday last (May 28.), when, being in Boston, Mr. Munroe (James M. & Co.) handed it to me. I pointed out to him the direction (in your hand-writing, "care of S. May Esq. Boston"; and he could only say, in apology, that he had been detained from his business by illness. His clerks & assistants are numerous enough, & ~~he~~ ought to have been attentive enough, to forward the parcel as directed. From his ~~place~~ store to my father's place of business is not 5 minutes' walk. ~~From~~ No parcel from Miss Carpenter came with it that I can ascertain. Crosby & Nichols have received none. Should you <sup>again</sup> send me parcels ~~by~~ through Chapman, I will thank you to request them to send under cover to Crosby & Nichols in preference to James Munroe & Co. The former are more prompt & attentive, as well as more reasonable in their charges.

MS. B. 1. 6 v. 7, p. 25



This has been the great week of our religious & reform anniversaries in Boston. I returned home yesterday, after spending 4 days there. The meetings, of which I cannot now speak with particularity, were never before so interesting to me. The New-Eng<sup>d</sup>. Anti-Slavery Convention took a most noble - a bold & lofty - stand with regard to the War. The Ministerial Conference (Unitarian), which was very fully attended, adopted ~~the following resolutions~~ (with scarcely enough in opposition to constitute a minority) two resolutions, touching Slavery & the Mexican War, introduced by Rev. Theodore Parker. The Am<sup>n</sup>. Unit<sup>n</sup>. Assoc<sup>n</sup>'s public Meeting at Dr. Gannett's Church, which was thronged to its utmost capacity, was the best meeting it ever held - the freest, most practical, most truly Christian, I have rarely attended any meeting (Anti-Slavery or any other) so spirit-stirring or so hopeful. I have requested my brother Frederick to send you a copy of the "Boston Courier" containing Mr. Parker's Resolutions, with so excellent remarks appended by Rev. John A. Buckingham, son of the Editor. I have also desired him to send to Mr. Armstrong a copy of today's "Christian World", which will contain a pretty full account of Anniversary Meetings & doings.

Having so late rec<sup>d</sup>. <sup>your</sup> the packet, I have not yet had time to examine the "Reports", but from a hasty inspection I am sure I shall be very glad to do so.

I am very glad to hear of the progress of your pamphlet, and hope soon to enjoy the pleasure of reading it. As you are so thoughtful about me, I know you will send me one. May I ask also a copy for Mr. Garrison, and one for Mr. Phillips, and one for Mr. Chapman? This I would not presume to do, if you ~~had~~ had not spoken of your intention to make so large a gratuitous distribution.

~~The correspondence, due in the case of our paper, will be suppressed, and whether or not we have any later facts to report, we will not be able to do so.~~

I lament to hear how small a compensation Mr. H. receives from the "Inquirer". Surely England, Scotland & Ireland should give him more than 1000 subscribers! The cost of your journals, ~~however~~, compared with ours, is very high; which must greatly limit their circulation. There is however fourfold more labour expended on the "Inquirer" - so, at least, I judge - than on our "Christian Register" or "Christian World", or any of our religious journals. Do you ever resort to travelling agencies to obtain subscribers for papers? This is much done here; but I suppose, in your country, would be too expensive. I trust the publication of the "Inquirer" receives



the subscription for the papers sent to my brother & myself. It should be paid through Chapman, receiving it from Crosby & Nichols.

I must not omit to mention that at the meeting of the "American Peace Society", last Monday evening, several <sup>of the</sup> addresses from England were unrolled & exhibited. Among them, the Address of many hundreds of women of Exeter was conspicuous & attracted most attention. One end was held by the speaker in the pulpit while the roll was opened till the other end extended far away into the audience. The Society had a good public meeting, but at its business meeting failed (I am told) to give any "certain sound" about the duty of Americans, & especially of Massachusetts men, in regard to sustaining the war. Shame!

I thank you, too, for the "Daily News", having the 3<sup>d</sup> letter on Am<sup>n</sup>. Slavery. I shall read it the first unoccupied half hour.

You have often asked the cost of newspapers sent me. It is quite trifling, 2 or 3 cents each. I paid 36 cents on the parcel received on Thursday. That is ~~rather~~ higher than it would have been by sailing packet; all freight by the steamships is high; but your parcel is worth more than that to me! My father's present correspondents in Liverpool are George Wright and Co. Parcels sent to them by railroad, to the care of my father in Boston, would reach me seasonably by sailing-packets; and, if it would cost you less to send that way than any other, please do so, and ~~not~~ otherwise, <sup>it is no matter</sup> I will shall not regard as burdensome the cost of anything you may please to send me.

I have written thus far, and just remember that I have not before acknowledged the reception of yours of April 15<sup>th</sup>, per 19<sup>th</sup> steamship, which came to hand May 6<sup>th</sup>. The "Cambria", the ship which brought it, ran upon the sands of Cape Cod Saturday night May 2<sup>d</sup>, but was got off, after much difficulty, without serious harm.

By 1<sup>st</sup> May ship, I acknowledged the reception of your generous donation to the "Mass. Antislavery Society". You will see it acknowledged in one of the Liberator's.

~~was sent to the same address as the one before~~



inform me not when in back this is done and you will be expected  
on my part to keep the paper etc.

You can continue to address me at "Leicester, or direct to  
care of my father, Samuel May, Boston, just as you please.

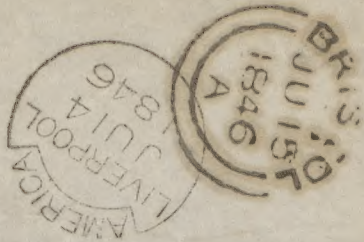
Here I must perforce, close — without reading over  
what I have written, to supply accidental omissions, &c. &c.

Pray give my best respects to Miss Estlin. Her note  
to my little Ade. gave great pleasure to us all.

With respect & affection, I am

Yours ever,  
Samuel May.





To,  
J. B. Estlin Esq<sup>r</sup>.

Bristol.

(England.)

Per Steamship,

June 1<sup>st</sup>

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